

THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHISM

illness came upon him. The Bandaresi forced their way to his bedside, to see for themselves if he were really dying. <^t "The Pope cannot survive," one was heard to say to the other, as they passed out of the palace ; ^{ct} "the time has come for us to be good Romans. Let us look to it that in this case the popedom shall remain with our nation."¹ From his deathbed, Gregory issued a bull empowering the cardinals to proceed immediately to the election of his successor without summoning or awaiting their absent colleagues, and ratifying the choice that should be made by the majority of two-thirds, even in the face of a hostile and obstinate minority. About the same time, he sent secretly after dark for Pierre Gandelm, the Provencal governor of the Castello Sant* Angelo, and committed to his care a large portion of the papal treasures, forbidding him to give up the keys of the fortress, chance what might, without an express order from the cardinals at Avignon.

This last French Pope recognized by the Church died on March 27, 1378, full of the gloomiest apprehensions ; according to one account, regarding his death as a direct intervention of God to prevent his returning to Avignon ; according to another, convinced that a fearful tempest was about to break upon the Church, for which he would be responsible for having lent faith to the visions of Birgitta and Catherine, and brought the papacy back to Rome. No sooner was the news of his death known, than preparations for the election of his successor began—both among the members of the Sacred College and those who, ostensibly, had no voice in the matter. There were mysterious meetings held by the Romans in the convent of Ara Caeli and in the Senator's palace on the Capitol. Deputations waited upon the cardinals to exhort them to choose a Roman, or at least an Italian Pope ; the same counsel was shouted after them in the streets ; and fierce threats were added. While the cardinals met each morning in Santa Maria Nuova, now Santa Francesca Romana, to celebrate a solemn requiem at the deceased pontiff's grave for the ¹ Declaration of Fra Luigi, Bishop of Assisi. *Archivk Vaticano*, LIV. 19, f. 183.